

CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 – Cancelled.

What is claimed is:

22. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, comprising:

an electronic legal research ordering and pricing server connected through a network to a legal research provider using a computer, a legal research acquirer or purchaser using a purchaser client, and a settlement organization;

means of receiving and storing in a database standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications, standardized secondary legal research instructions and specifications, and standardized specific legal research instructions and specifications;

means of receiving and storing in a database numerical complexity values assigned to each standardized primary, secondary and specific legal research instruction and specification;

means of receiving and storing in a database standardized price ranges assigned to said numerical complexity values;

means of receiving and storing in a database standardized delivery time and means options and prices assigned to said delivery time and means options;

means of receiving display request information from a purchaser client and generating, organizing and displaying to the purchaser client the stored standardized primary, secondary and specific legal research instructions and specifications and the standardized delivery time and means options;

means of receiving and storing in a database the standardized primary, secondary and specific legal research instructions and specifications and standardized delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client when making a legal research assignment, including a statement of the issue to be researched;

means of automatically calculating the total value for a legal research assignment made by said purchaser client by accessing and totaling the stored numerical complexity values assigned to each stored legal research instruction and specification option selected by said purchaser client;

means of automatically calculating an interim price for the legal research assignment placed by the purchaser client by accessing and identifying the stored price range that corresponds to the stored total numerical complexity value for the legal research assignment made by the purchaser client;

means of automatically calculating the final price of the legal research assignment placed by the purchaser client by adding to or deducting from said interim price the stored price for the standardized delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client;

means of generating, organizing and displaying to the purchaser client a summary of the standardized legal research instructions and specifications and the standardized delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client, together with the said automated final price for the legal research order;

means of receiving input and authorization from said purchaser client to finalize and place said legal research assignment order, and means for receiving and storing the purchaser's identification and transaction information;

means of requesting a settlement organization connected to the network to complete the initiated transaction;

means of generating and conveying to a legal research provider for each legal research assignment a summary of the standardized legal research instructions and specifications selected by the purchaser client, the standardized delivery time and means options selected by the purchaser client, the legal issue stated by the purchaser client, the automated final price for each order and customer and payment information, so the order can be fulfilled.

23. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research, as defined in claim 22, further comprising means of:

editing said standardized legal research instructions and specifications and options;

editing said setting of numerical complexity values for said legal research instructions and specifications;

editing said setting of corresponding price ranges

editing said standardized delivery time and means options and prices.

24. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22,

wherein the standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications are type of analysis, controlling law, forum, sources of law, subject matter and type of research.

25. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22,

wherein said standardized delivery time and means prices are percentage adjustments made to said price ranges that correspond to the numerical complexity value of the selected standardized legal research instructions and specifications, and;

wherein there are means of reaching the said final price by making said percentage adjustment to the said interim price based upon the stored and selected delivery time and means percentage adjustments.

25. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22,

wherein there are means of receiving and storing standardized discounts and premiums corresponding to the number and type of orders placed and number and type of services requested, and;

wherein there are means of adjusting the said automated final price to reflect said stored discounts and premiums.

26. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22, further comprising means of:

modifying the legal research assignment made by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect standardized legal research instructions and specifications;

modifying the legal research order placed by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect standardized delivery time and means options;

recalculating the automated interim and final prices based upon said modifications of said legal research and specification options and said delivery time and means options.

27. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22, further comprising means of:

accepting more than one legal research assignment at a time by a purchaser client and recalculating the total price to include the price for all legal research assignments made;

accepting the deletion of one or more of several legal research assignments by the purchaser client and recalculating the total price to include the price for all legal research orders placed.

28. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22,

wherein a settlement organization is not used to complete the transaction (as in the case of direct payment by cash or check or the establishment of an account).

29. (new) An apparatus for standardizing and automating the assignment and valuation of legal research projects, as defined in claim 22,

wherein the legal research project assignment and valuation process takes place without establishing pricing and without purchasing (as with an apparatus for automating the assignment and valuation of legal research projects within a law firm or other organization, where purchasing the legal research is not required, or an overall fee contract for multiple assignments has been established).

30. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, comprising the steps of:

receiving and storing in an electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications that identify essential legal research parameters;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized legal research sub-instructions and sub-specifications;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server specific standardized legal research instructions and specifications;

setting each standardized primary, sub and specific legal research instruction and specification as either a categorical guide or a legal research option that can be selected by a purchaser client;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server a numerical complexity value for each legal research instruction and specification that can be selected by said purchaser client when ordering legal research;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized price ranges that correspond to the said numerical complexity values;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server delivery time and means options that can be selected by a purchaser client and prices for said options;

organizing and displaying said standardized legal research primary, sub and specific instructions and specifications, and delivery time and means options, for viewing and selection by a purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the standardized legal research instruction and specification options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the standardized legal research delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the legal issue to be researched, as stated by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

calculating the total numerical complexity value of the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by totaling the numerical complexity values stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server for each legal research instruction and specification option selected by said purchaser client;

calculating an interim price for the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by identifying the price range stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server that corresponds to the said total numerical complexity value for the legal research order placed by said purchaser client;

calculating the final price of the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by adding to or deducting from said interim price the stored price associated with the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

organizing and displaying a summary of the legal research instruction and specification options and the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client, together with the said final

price for the legal research order, for viewing, confirmation and purchase by said purchaser client, and settlement through a settlement organization;

organizing and conveying to a legal research provider a summary of the legal research instruction and specification options and the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client, together with the said final price for the legal research order and customer and payment information, for use in fulfilling said order.

31. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30, further comprising the steps of:

editing said standardized legal research primary, sub and specific instructions and specifications;

editing said setting of legal research categorical guides and legal research options;

editing said setting of numerical values for said legal research options;

editing said setting of corresponding price ranges;

editing said delivery time and means options and prices.

32. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30,

wherein the standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications are type of analysis, controlling law, forum, sources of law, subject matter and type of research.

33. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30,

wherein said delivery time and means prices are percentage adjustments made to said price ranges that correspond to the numerical value of selected legal research options, and;

wherein the said final price is reached by making said percentage adjustment to the said interim price based upon the stored and selected delivery time and means percentage adjustments.

34. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30,

wherein discounts and premiums corresponding to the number and type of orders placed and number and type of services requested are received and stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server, and;

wherein the said final price is further adjusted to reflect said stored discounts and premiums.

35. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30, further comprising the steps of:

modifying the legal research order placed by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect standardized legal research instruction and specification options;

modifying the legal research order placed by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect delivery time and means options;

recalculating the said interim and final prices based upon said modifications made by the purchaser client.

36. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30, further comprising the steps of:

accepting and storing more than one legal research order at a time by said purchaser client and calculating a price for the entire order to include the price for all legal research orders placed; accepting and storing the deletion of one or more of several legal research orders by said purchaser client and recalculating the price for the entire order to include the price for all legal research orders placed.

37. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30,

wherein a settlement organization is not used to complete the transaction (as in the case of direct payment by cash or check or the establishment of an account).

38. (new) A computerized method of automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, as defined in claim 30,

wherein the legal research project assignment and valuation process takes place without establishing pricing and without purchasing (as with a method for automating the assignment and valuation of legal research projects within a law firm or other organization, where purchasing the legal research is not required, or an overall fee contract for multiple assignments has been established).

39. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects, comprising the steps of:

receiving and storing in an electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications that identify essential legal research parameters;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized legal research sub-instructions and sub-specifications;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server specific standardized legal research instructions and specifications;

setting each standardized primary, sub and specific legal research instruction and specification as either a categorical guide or a legal research option that can be selected by a purchaser client;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server a numerical complexity value for each legal research instruction and specification that can be selected by said purchaser client when ordering legal research;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server price ranges that correspond to the said numerical complexity values;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server standardized delivery time and means options that can be selected by a purchaser client and prices for said options;

organizing and displaying said standardized legal research primary, sub and specific instructions and specifications, and delivery time and means options, for viewing and selection by a purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the legal research instruction and specification options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the legal research delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

receiving and storing in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server the legal issue to be researched, as stated by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

calculating the total numerical complexity value of the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by totaling the numerical complexity values stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server for each legal research instruction and specification option selected by said purchaser client;

calculating an interim price for the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by identifying the price range stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server that corresponds to the said total numerical complexity value for the legal research order placed by said purchaser client;

calculating the final price of the legal research order placed by said purchaser client by adding to or deducting from said interim price the stored price associated with the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client in placing a legal research order;

organizing and displaying a summary of the legal research instruction and specification options and the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client, together with the said final

price for the legal research order, for viewing, confirmation and purchase by said purchaser client, and settlement through a settlement organization;

organizing and conveying to a legal research provider a summary of the legal research instruction and specification options and the delivery time and means options selected by said purchaser client, together with the said final price for the legal research order and customer and payment information, for use in fulfilling said order.

40. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39, causing the computer to perform a method comprising the further steps of:

- editing said standardized legal research primary, sub and specific instructions and specifications;
- editing said setting of legal research categorical guides and legal research options;
- editing said setting of numerical values for said legal research options;
- editing said setting of corresponding price ranges;
- editing said delivery time and means options and prices.

41. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39,

wherein the standardized primary legal research instructions and specifications are type of analysis, controlling law, forum, sources of law, subject matter and type of research.

42. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39,

wherein said delivery time and means prices are percentage adjustments made to said price ranges that correspond to the numerical value of selected legal research options, and;

wherein the said final price is reached by making said percentage adjustment to the said interim price based upon the stored and selected delivery time and means percentage adjustments.

43. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39,

wherein discounts and premiums corresponding to the number and type of orders placed and number and type of services requested are received and stored in said electronic legal research ordering and pricing server, and;

wherein the said final price is further adjusted to reflect said stored discounts and premiums.

44. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39 comprising the further steps of:

modifying the legal research order placed by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect legal research instruction and specification options;

modifying the legal research order placed by the purchaser client by allowing said purchaser client to select or deselect delivery time and means options;

recalculating the interim and final prices based upon said modifications made by said purchaser client.

45. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39 comprising the further steps of:

accepting more than one legal research order at a time by the purchaser client and calculating a total price for all legal research orders placed;

accepting the deletion of one or more of several legal research orders by the purchaser client and calculating a total price for all legal research orders placed.

46. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39,

wherein a settlement organization is not used to complete the transaction (as in the case of direct payment by cash or check or the establishment of an account).

47. (new) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with executable instructions constituting a program for automating the assignment, valuation, pricing and purchasing of legal research projects as defined in claim 39,

wherein the legal research project assignment and valuation process takes place without establishing pricing and without purchasing (as with a method for automating the assignment and valuation of legal research projects within a law firm or other organization, where purchasing the legal research is not required, or an overall fee contract for multiple assignments has been established).